

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 DHA-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05 IGA-02 TRSE-00 OMB-01 EB-08
ACDA-07 /079 W
-----020502Z 024648 /22

R 011104Z APR 77
FM AMEMBASSY ACCRA
TO SECSTATE WAHSDC 7300

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 ACCRA 2443

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: SHUM, GH
SUBJ: GHANAIAN REACTION TO HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT

REF: STATE 60208

1. GOG COMMISSIONER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS FELLI
SUMMONED ME MORNING OF MARCH 31. AFTER GREETING ME
CORDIALLY AND CHATTING BRIEFLY ABOUT RECENT VISIT OF
PRINCE OF WALES TO GHANA, HE HANDED ME AN AIDE
MEMOIRE, TEXT OF WHICH IS CONTAINED IN PARA 2 BELOW.

2. QUOTE. THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE
REPUBLIC OF GHANA PRESENTS ITS COMPLIMENTS TO THE
EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AND, WITH
REFERENCE TO THE EMBASSY'S NOTE NO 21 OF 11TH MARCH,
1977, HAS THE HONOUR TO STATE THAT THE MINISTRY IS
APPRECIATIVE OF THE EMBASSY'S COURTESY IN BRINGING
TO ITS ATTENTION IN ADVANCE OF PUBLICATION THE
STATEMENT ON GHANA WHICH IS TO BE INCLUDED IN A
REPORT TO THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES.

THE MINISTRY MUST, HOWEVER, REGISTER ITS SURPRISE
THAT THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE OF THE UNITED STATES
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COULD BE THE SOURCE OF A REPORT WHICH IS FACTUALLY
INCORRECT, FROM THE VIEWPOINT OF GHANA, AND WHICH
MAY HAVE THE EFFECT OF UNDERMINING THE CORDIAL
RELATIONS EXISTING BETWEEN GHANA AND THE UNITED STATES.

IN THIS CONNECTION, THE MINISTRY WISHES TO STATE
THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF GHANA TAKES STRONG EXCEPTION

TO AND TOTALLY REJECTS THE ALLEGATION THAT PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR THE CALL BY THE SUPREME MILITARY COUNCIL FOR A UNION GOVERNMENT WAS "GOVERNMENT-INSPIRED."

THE MINISTRY ALSO REGRETS THAT THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE SHOULD HAVE THOUGHT IT FIT TO SINGLE OUT FOR SPECIAL MENTION THE SUBJECTIVE, UNSUBSTANTIATED OPINION OF ONE PRIVATE ORGANIZATION WHICH HAPPENS TO BE ADVERSE TO GHANA'S GOOD NAME; MORE PARTICULARLY AS THE DEPARTMENT MUST BE FULLY AWARE OF THE SITUATION IN GHANA AND MUST HAVE AVAILABLE PLENTY OF FACTS CONTRADICTORY TO THE VIEW PRONOUNCED IN THE FREEDOM HOUSE SURVEY OF 1975, AND QUOTED IN THE DEPARTMENT'S REPORT. IN THIS CONNECTION, THE MINISTRY IS TO STATE THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF GHANA TAKES A SERIOUS VIEW OF THE INSINUATION, AND IS GRAVELY CONCERNED THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES SHOULD APPEAR TO SANCTION, OR SHOULD TAKE MEASURES WHICH WIDELY PUBLICISE, DOUBTFUL ALLEGATIONS HOSTILE TO A FRIENDLY COUNTRY. THE GOVERNMENT EARNESTLY HOPES THAT THE UNITED STATES ADMINISTRATION WILL BE ABLE TO REVIEW ITS INTENTIONS IN THE LIGHT OF THE VIEWS AND SENTIMENTS HERE CONVEYED.

THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF GHANA AVAILS ITSELF OF THIS OPPORTUNITY TO RENEW TO THE EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA THE ASSURANCES OF ITS HIGHEST CONSIDERATION. UNQUOTE

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3. ALTHOUGH THE NOTE MAKES UNMISTAKABLY CLEAR GOG'S UNHAPPINESS WITH THE HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT, FELLI SOFTENED IT SOMEWHAT IN HIS SUPPLEMENTARY ORAL PRESENTATION. INDEED, HE DWELT AT SOME LENGTH ON GOG APPRECIATION OF OUR HAVING GIVEN ADVANCE NOTICE AND SATISFACTION THAT STATE DEPARTMENT PORTION OF REPORT, "WITH SOME EXCEPTIONS", SEEMED "WELL BALANCED." FELLI ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT HE MUST TAKE EXCEPTION TO OUR ALLEGATION THAT SUPPORT FOR UNION GOVERNMENT WAS GOVERNMENT INSPIRED. HE SAID IT WAS SIMPLY "NOT TRUE" THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD OR WAS ORGANIZING SUPPORT FOR UNION GOVERNMENT AND HE HOPED THAT I WOULD SO INFORM WASHINGTON. HE TOOK PARTICULAR EXCEPTION TO OUR INCLUSION IN THE REPORT OF INFORMATION FROM PRIVATE SOURCES SUCH AS AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL AND FREEDOM HOUSE. I AGAIN EXPLAINED THE BACKGROUND TO THEIR INCLUSION, STRESSING (AS WE HAD DONE IN OUR NOTE) THAT IT WAS A LEGAL REQUIREMENT TO DO SO. FELLI NEVERTHELESS DESCRIBED THEIR INCLUSION AS "UNFAIR"

AND THEIR INFORMATION AS "INACCURATE." HE FAILED TO
SEE WHY THE USG COULD NOT HAVE RELIED ON ITS OWN
REPORTS.

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R 011104Z APR 77
FM AMEMBASSY ACCRA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7301

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 ACCRA 2443

4. FELLI STRESSED GOG'S GREAT DELIGHT IN PRESIDENT
CARTER'S ADMINISTRATION AND IN WHAT HE BELIEVED TO
BE ITS NEW AND MORE REALISTIC POLICY TOWARD AFRICA.
HE PARTICULARLY WELCOMED OUR NEW EMPHASIS ON
HUMAN RIGHTS AND EMPHASIZED THAT THE GOG HAD TAKEN SEVERAL
STEPS SINCE 1972 TO ILLUSTRATE ITS OWN SIMILAR
COMMITMENT. IN CONTRAST TO FORMER PRIME MINISTER
BUSIA'S BANNING OF THE TUC AND STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS,
FOR INSTANCE, PRESENT GOVERNMENT PERMITS THEM
COMPLETE FREEDOM. BUSIA HAD JAILED MANY PEOPLE AND
REFUSED TO ACCEPT COURT JUDGMENTS; PRESENT GOVERNMENT
HAD CHANGED THIS. WHILE ADMITTING THAT SOME PERSONS
HAVE BEEN IMPRISONED UNDER GHANAIAI PREVENTIVE
DETENTION LAW, FELLI HOPED WE WOULD REMEMBER THAT
THIS WAS IN FACT LEGAL UNDER GHANAIAI LAW AND THAT IN
ANY CASE, IT WAS UTILIZED RARELY AND THEN "USUALLY"
ONLY IN CASES OF "HARDENED CRIMINALS."

5. RE SITUATION OF PRESS IN GHANA, FELLI SAID THAT
WHILE HE HIMSELF HAS OFTEN CALLED IN EDITORS AND
REPORTERS FOR BRIEFINGS AND APPEALED TO THEM FOR
BALANCE IN THEIR REPORTING--USUALLY IN AN ATTEMPT TO
KEEP THEM FROM HARMING RELATIONS WITH FRIENDLY
COUNTRIES SUCH AS US--NEITHER HE NOR ANY ONE ELSE IN
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GOG DICTATED POLICY TO THE PRESS. FELLI REPEATED THAT WHILE GOG WAS ITSELF VERY SENSITIVE TO HUMAN RIGHTS PROBLEMS AND WELCOMED PRESIDENT CARTER'S NEW EMPHASIS IN THIS AREA, HE MUST TAKE STRONG EXCEPTION TO THE INCLUSION IN THE REPORT OF THE OPINIONS OF THE TWO PRIVATE GROUPS. HE ASKED THAT I REPORT THE GHANAIAN OBJECTIONS TO WASHINGTON, AND I SAID I WOULD OF COURSE DO SO.

6. COMMENT: FELLI WAS SPEAKING MORE IN SORROW THAN IN ANGER, AND I DOUBT THAT WE WILL HAVE MORE OFFICIAL FALL-OUT FROM THE HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT. IT REMAINS PROBABLE, HOWEVER, THAT WE WILL BE ATTACKED IN THE PRESS, WHICH HAS SO FAR IGNORED THE SUBJECT. FELLI'S DENIAL TO ME THAT THE GOG HAD ORCHESTRATED DEMONSTRATIONS AND OTHER MANIFESTATIONS OF SUPPORT FOR UNION GOVERNMENT LACKED REAL CONVICTION, AND WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT GOG IS IN FACT DOING SO.
SMITH

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